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CHALMERS ON CHARITY. Arranged and edited by N. Masterman, M. A. Archibald Constable & Co., Westminster, 1900. Pp. xxii., 414.

There is no one branch of knowledge in which experience has been so frequently gained and lost, as that which refers to the art of Charity and the disease of Pauperism. Elsewhere men experiment and learn and accumulate knowledge, which they indeed may have to leave behind them; but the harvest they have accumulated is garnered and stored for the use of the generations who come after them, and who labor as eagerly in the appropriation of the old treasure as in the acquisition of new. Small indeed would be our range of knowledge if each generation of men had begun anew for itself the heavy task of buying its own experience, and yet that is much what we have been content to do in the field of social work. Every thirty years or so we start afresh in our efforts to combat pauperism and relieve distress, with new ideas, new aspirations, new methods; which, if we did but know it, have all been conceived and tried and tested over and over again before our time. All our new devices, all our eager experiments, all our heart-breaking failures and false issues, we might have spared ourselves if we had but studied first the records of past experience. For to some extent at least the records are there, and it is nothing but a strange wilfulness, and misplaced self-confidence in philanthropists and statesmen which make them so persistently blind to the lessons of the past. Had we been trained to study in this branch of knowledge as in others, and to build our own hopes on a firm basis of experience, we might have been far advanced by now in the path of social reform.

Perhaps the most important contribution made by any one person towards this knowledge was that of Dr. Chalmers. It is hardly too much to say that he both discovered and practised the art of a wise treatment of poverty, and that in his work and writings are to be found the principles upon which all future progress must be based. To a few—probably very few—students and experts he has long been a familiar guide, but for most social workers he will be practically a re-discovery. And yet it is little over fifty years since he died, and since his teaching was attracting the attention of legislators and influencing the charitable work of thoughtful people all over the United Kingdom. In the book

before us Mr. Masterman has undertaken to make a selection from his writings and to give an account of his work which should be very important in recalling attention to the teaching of a great master.

That teaching, like all teaching which embodies great truths, is both simple and difficult. It is simple in that it goes right to the heart of the matter, and relies solely upon a few great facts of human nature. It is difficult in that it demands great faith and patience and humility from its disciples. "Appeal to the higher qualities of men, and refrain from tempting them into dependence, and there will be no pauper class"; that in brief was what Chalmers said, and what he proved by active trial.

The conditions under which he worked differed in one important point from those of England to-day, for he was contending against the introduction of a Poor Law into Scotland, and aimed at showing that it was not only unnecessary, but certain to be detrimental. But his argument remains just as true, and indeed is being sadly verified by our own experience of the impossibility of getting rid of a pauper class while the Poor Law exists. His great principle was "the sufficiency of the poor"; their sufficiency, that is, to maintain themselves and to give each other all necessary assistance in times of difficulty and distress. Nor was it any theoretical sufficiency upon which he relied; upon what the poor should be able to do under different economic conditions. "It is a great comfort to know," he says quaintly, "from the general fact of the sums expended by the working classes on intemperance alone, that after all, and apart from private Charity, the *matériel* of an entire subsistence passes into their hands, and that naught but the *morale* is wanting which might impress a right distribution upon it." That *morale*, he held, would naturally show itself, if the people were not tempted to neglect the natural ties which hold them together, and to look to public funds instead of to their own exertions.

But he was far from thinking that the poor should be severely let alone, or that the rich have no duty towards them. He insisted upon what he called the "aggressive method." The real friend of the poor will always be making demands upon them; urging them to educate their children, to support the parish institutions, to assist their neighbors, nay even to give of their money to missions and churches. Only by so doing is it possible to help them on in the difficult path they have to tread. The

rich, on the other hand, must refrain from starting funds and charities, they must even refrain from giving to individuals except with caution and knowledge; but they must give freely towards all educational institutions and asylums for the afflicted.

But why, it may be objected, if the poor may give to each other without ill effects, may not the rich, or better still the state, give to the poor? In the one case the giving is done with difficulty and sacrifice; in the other no one feels any sacrifice at all. Chalmers gives no uncertain answer. It is just because of the sacrifice involved that the help of the poor is safe, and certain not to be abused. It will be given with full knowledge, it will be accepted only in real need. On the other hand when the source from which Charity flows is practically impersonal, there will be no moderation in the claims made upon it, and little wisdom in its bestowal.

One other point he presses as of ultimate importance; and that is the dissociation of alms-giving from the functions of the minister of religion. That does not imply that the church should abandon the work; his whole system was based upon the proper organization of the church parish. But until he had made it understood that he and his elders had broken off all connection with the charities, and handed over to his deacons the work of looking after the material needs of the parish, he found it impossible to make real progress with his spiritual ministry. At the present day, when ministers of all denominations insist so vehemently on their claims to be alms-givers as well as teachers, the opposite point of view should be seriously pressed. But for the actual account of Chalmers' work and its success, we must refer the reader to Mr. Masterman's book, and, if it can be obtained, to Chalmers' own book, "*On the Sufficiency of the Parochial System without a Poor Rate.*"

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A CRITICAL EXPOSITION OF THE PHILOSOPHY OF LEIBNITZ, with an Appendix of leading passages. By Bertrand Russell. Cambridge: University Press, 1900. Pp. ix, 311.

Mr. Russell's book is decidedly one of the most important of recent contributions both to the history of philosophy and to philosophical criticism. It is by no means easy reading, but that